Operating Staff Announces Recipients of Annual Outstanding Service Awards for 2010

Four members of NIU’s Operating Staff have been chosen to receive the Outstanding Service Award for 2010. The recipients are Jill Draves, a secretary in the Department of Teaching and Learning; Mary Kain, office administrator for the School of Nursing and Health Studies; Renee Page, program administrative assistant for the Office of External Programs in the College of Visual and Performing Arts; and Sophia Varcados, graphic designer in Media Services, part of the Division of University Relations.

More than 1,600 employees make up the Civil Service staff. Each year, four are selected by a committee of their peers to receive the award of plaques and $1,500, and they are honored at the Annual Service Awards Banquet.

Here is a closer look at the recipients.

Jill Draves
Secretary
Department of Teaching and Learning, College of Education

Many, if not most, secretaries can claim that they act as the eyes and ears of their bosses. For Jill Draves, half of that statement is completely true. Draves is secretary to three professors and four adjunct instructors who teach in the Department of Teaching and Learning’s visual disabilities program. Gaylen Kapperman, coordinator of that program, is himself severely visually disabled.

“Without her assistance, I could not carry on with my duties here,” Kapperman says. “She reads numerous pieces to me whenever that is necessary. She handles all types of confidential information that pass across my desk. Jill accompanies me to various high-level committee meetings.”

Employed as Kapperman’s secretary for 20 of her 27 years at NIU, Draves oversees a budget that requires her management of several externally funded grants.

Between 20 and 25 graduate assistants and between 10 and 15 undergraduate students are recipients each year of state and federal dollars as well. This year’s total is $1.3 million.

She provides the program’s 50 students not only information on navigating university rules and regulations but with advice and nurturing. For those who are visually disabled, she understands and makes the necessary accommodations.

In the DeKalb County community, she is known for sharing her tie-dying skills at local festivals and libraries, where she has taught that art to children. She also is a member of the DeKalb County Quilters Guild and of Angels for Hope, which crochets angels, butterflies and smiley faces to send to people in need of hope.

Mary Kain
Office administrator
School of Nursing and Health Studies, College of Health and Human Sciences

Mary Kain is resourceful. She found financial support for students traveling abroad with a professor. She located resources to charter a bus for undergraduates taking a field trip to Springfield. She searched tirelessly

(cont. on next page)
for and secured a tuition waiver for a graduate student experiencing extreme hardship in his personal life.

Kain, who joined NIU a decade ago, doubled her workload in 2007 when the nursing school merged with programs in public health and health administration. She now completes all the paperwork and manages multiple budgets for a school with 62 full-time employees and faculty, 20 part-time faculty and 18 graduate assistants. When the school began a program in 2010 that allows for more students, it was Kain who took on the administration of new and complex funding sources from the provost’s office.

The treasured employee oversaw the construction of a new teaching methods laboratory for Public Health/Health Education and of a human patient simulation laboratory for the School of Nursing. She managed remodeling projects to demolish and enlarge classrooms and to outfit offices to accommodate more faculty.

“We couldn’t have done it without her,” says Mary Elaine Koren, associate professor and area coordinator for nursing. “Mary goes well beyond her prescribed responsibilities and gives 100 percent effort. She is consistently a productive employee who gives her all.”

Away from NIU, she participated in retreats to help children prepare for first communion and confirmation at St. Mary’s Church. She also served in fundraising roles for the DeKalb High School varsity baseball team and United Way.

**Renee Page**
Program administrative assistant
Office of External Programs, College of Visual and Performing Arts

When visitors arrive on foot, over the phone or via e-mail, Page is always ready to help them choose classes, ensembles or teachers for private music lessons and get them registered for those activities as well as summer camps, off-campus credit courses or high school day music events. She also serves as a liaison with NIU faculty and students who teach those classes.

Meanwhile, Page employs her public relations background in writing and distributing several news releases each year and coordinating media interviews.

“Renee handles a very complicated job with grace and style,” says Deborah Booth, director of external programs. “She is a good listener and understands how to help people directly or when it is necessary to contact others. Her work has been a major factor in the growth and strength of our office.”

She is vice president of Vince Carney Community Theatre in her hometown of Rochelle, where she also has served on the historic preservation committee and tourism advisory board. She is editor of the Rochelle edition of “InVironments” magazine.

**Sophia Varcados**
Graphic designer
Media Services, Division of University Relations

The works of Sophia Varcados are not only informative but a feast for the eyes and the imagination.

Her graphic design projects, including advertising, announcement cards, banners, displays, murals and posters offer rich imagery, thanks to her unusual willingness to research the topics she’s been asked to promote.

Varcados is always mindful of project goals and deadlines, clients say, while she also remains easy-going and good-humored in spite of often-tight timeframes and complex demands.

When cost-effective solutions are needed, Varcados finds them – and suggests more. She also sees beyond the project at hand to help clients create consistent, branded graphic identities.

Of course, the 10-year NIU employee is an artist at heart.

“Sophia saw that the Anthropology Museum’s painting of a mastodon was in rather sad condition (it looked like a big brown blob rather than a mastodon),” says Judy Ledgerwood, professor of anthropology. “She volunteered to come in on her own time and repaint the image – floor to ceiling on one wall – when we remodeled the Ice Age exhibit. As we now prepare to move from the Stevens Building to Cole Hall and our new renovated space, one of my only regrets is that we will leave behind Sophia’s mastodon painting.”

Away from work, she has shared her design talents and her time with programs at Wright Elementary School and Clinton-Rosette Middle School and served as a judge for the history fair at NIU. She also participates in local bike-a-thons, including the “Beanzie” ride for Kiwanis and “Bike Like an Egyptian” for the Egyptian Theatre.

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**Employment Changes**

**March 2011**

**Welcome New Employees**
Shaunda Bradley, Police Officer—Public Safety
Tanya Cervantes, Admissions/Records Specialist I—Registration and Records
Alexandra Chapman, Admissions/Records Specialist I—Registration and Records
Jeffrey Donohue, Jr., Police Officer—Public Safety
Prashanth Gurrala, IT Technical Associate—Information Services
Christina Henry, Ambulatory Care Aide I—College of Health and Human Sciences
David Lauger, Police Officer—Public Safety
Jasmin McIntosh, Accountant I—Controller
Renee Meszaros, Admissions/Records Specialist I—Registration and Records
Allen Smoot, Jr., Police Telecommunicator—Public Safety

**Changes**
Christopher Samples to Accountant II—Controller
Vicky Vosburgh to Office Administrator—Kinesiology and Physical Education

**Change in Department**
Adam Abell, IT Support Associate to Information Services
Cherry Felton, Licensed Practical Nurse II to College of Health and Human Sciences
Chiquita Heard, Ambulatory Care Assistant to College of Health and Human Sciences
Cynthia Lund, Ambulatory Care Supervisor to College of Health and Human Sciences
Lilia Robles, Ambulatory Care Aide II to College of Health and Human Sciences
Change in Title
Atique Ahmed to Senior Engineer—Architecture and Engineering

Death
Ruth Kaus, Assistant Bookstore Manager—Holmes Student Center
William McDermott, Police Officer—Public Safety

Name Changes
Cindy Felix to Cythia Lund, Ambulatory Care Supervisor—Allied Health and Communicative Disorders
Jasmin Nguyen to Jasmin McIntosh, Accountant I—Controller

Retirements
Wayne Bergman, Stationary Engineer—Physical Plant
Paul McMenamin, Electrician—Physical Plant
Georgeta Morosanu, Senior Applications Analyst—Information

Separations
Charles Craft, Elevator Mechanic—Physical Plant
Deborah Jump, Business/Administrative Associate—Controller
Daniel Mikos, Office Support Associate—Health Services
Rachelle Phillips, Account Technician I—Holmes Student Center
Cassandra Weyland, Office Support Associate—Nursing and Health Studies

April 2011
Welcome New Employees
Zachary Bond, Office Support Associate—Nursing and Health Studies
Carrie Bos, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Keenan Buckle, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Joshua Caputo, Building Service Worker—Building Services
James Cardine, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Wayne Cliffe, Cook—Holmes Student Center
Bradley Crocker, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Tomas Cuizon, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Taylor Dillon, Food Service Sanitation Lab—Housing & Dining
Kyle Dorland, Building Service Worker—Building Services
John Edwards, Motorcycle Safety Specialist—Motorcycle Safety
James Farley, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Katie Gauthier, Program Administrative Assistant—International Programs
Nathan Girton, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Amanda Grove, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Christina Hawk, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Andrew Johnson, IT Technical Associate—Information Services
Timothy Kowalik, IT Technical Associate—Information Services
Garland Mann-Lamb, Cook—Housing & Dining
Michael Mattson, IT Technical Associate—Information Services
Lauren Mock, Program Administrative Associate—International Programs
Hristos Panourgias, Building Service Worker—Building Services
David Pevonka, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Gehman Radtke, III, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Rebecca Rahe, Admissions/Records Specialist I—Registration and Records
Andy Smith, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Brady Smith, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Jamie Stage, Kitchen Helper—Housing and Dining
Douglas Tarvestad, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Corey Twombly, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Jodi Tyrrell, Clerical Assistant—Information Services

Changes
Charles Bagot to Financial Aid Adviser II—Student Financial Aid
Teresa Caron to Medical Technologist III—Health Services
Samuel Collin to Building Service Worker—Building Services
Brandon Mathesius to Cooks Helper—Housing & Dining
Javier Vargas to Building Service Worker—Building Services

Change in Department
Cynthia Lund, Ambulatory Care Supervisor to Allied Health and Communicative Disorders

Name Changes
Diane Keding to Diane Vagle, Office Manager—Psychology

Retirements
Joseph Hodder, Police Corporal—Public Safety
Gerald Holiday, Pipefitter—Physical Plant
Sandra Sosnowski, Health Care Administrator I—Health Services
Clair Williams, Assistant to the Comptroller—University Legal Services
Michael Zeman, Instructional Communications Technical Operator II—Holmes Student Center

Separations
Jennifer Knigge, Office Support Associate—College of Engineering and Engineering Technology
Megan Krok, Office Support Associate—Building Services
Michael Rios, Police Telecommunicator—Public Safety
Allen Smoot, Jr., Police Telecommunicator—Public Safety
Terry Williams, Police Officer—Public Safety

Service Awards
March 2011
5 Years
Jeremy Benson—Housing & Dining
Kenneth George—Architecture and Engineering
Jesse Hastings—Customer Support Services
Sheetal Kumar—Admissions
Gerardo Rangel—Electrical Shop
Grace Wahler—Controller
Darren Walker—Public Safety
Mary Williams—Bursar
Jennifer Wisser—Advancement Services

10 Years
Steven Farmer—Network Support
Barbara Kolb—Media Services
James Sheridan—Building Services

15 Years
John Challand—Building Services
Barbara Daker—Hoffman Estates

20 Years
Janice Niedzwiecki—Division of Research and Graduate Studies
Sally Nieman—Housing & Dining
Patricia Peshiah—Heating Plant
Arvind Sarup—Information Services
Michael Zeman—Holmes Center Administration

25 Years
Kevin Howard—Heating Plant

30 Years
Michael Hall—Materials Management

35 Years
William Kreda—Information Services

April 2011
5 Years
Beth Blum—Student Financial Aid
Craig Diefenderfer—Public Safety
Nancy Graff—College of Health and Human Sciences
Misty Holmes—Building Services
Annual Benefits Choice Period Begins

NIU employees will be receiving, at their home address, a letter from the Department of Central Management Services (CMS) regarding this year’s Benefit Choice Period. Changes for FY2012 that are currently definitive are summarized in the letter. However, there are some revisions that have yet to be finalized at the state level. Thus, vendor names, coverage areas and rates are not available at this time.

As a result of the delay in finalizing managed care options, CMS has informed the universities of a planned extension of the Benefits Choice Period beyond the May 31 closing date. Accordingly, medical plan changes (with the exception of enrollments into Quality Care or HMO Illinois) should not be submitted.

NIU will continue to provide employees with information as it is received, but employees are encouraged to monitor the CMS benefits website at www.state.il.us/cms/3_servicese_ben_choice/ for the most up-to-date information and a copy of the Benefit Choice Options Period Booklet.

Once managed care contracts are finalized, CMS will update the Benefit Choice Options Booklet with vendor names, coverage areas and rates. At that time, the end date for the Benefit Choice Period will also be determined. Human Resource Services will inform the campus as additional information becomes finalized. Employees without access to computers can visit Human Resource Services at its main office or at the Swen Parson Service Center, room 110.

Opportunities to Serve

Operating Staff Council has two additional opportunities for you to serve on a university committee. We are looking for representation for the following:

1. Community Standards and Student Conduct Advisory Board – 1 person for a 3-year term. The Committee meets approximately monthly per members’ availability. For more information on the committee please visit: www.niu.edu/u_council/committees/2011-12/csscab.shtml
2. Student Conduct Board – 2 people for a 3-year term. The Committee meets only as needed. For more information on the committee please visit: www.niu.edu/u_council/committees/2011-12/scb.shtml

If you are interested in serving on either of these committees please submit a “Committee Interest” sheet located on the OSC website at www.niu.edu/osc/agencies/Committees/Univ_Committee-Commissions-form.doc